3: Wallace & Hoebel E-4, 5 (1933, 1945) 1952
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Roberts' Rules of Order, but their procedure was on a very high level of parliamentary decorum. 623

Such a council was held in 1843 to decide the fate of the ambassadors sent by President Sam Houston of the Republic of Texas to invite the Comanches to discuss a treaty. Each speaker, as his turn came, delivered a vociferous oration, but was never interrupted. When all who were entitled to speak had finished, the head chief, whose turn it was, remained silent, and no one moved or spoke from noon until four o'clock. Either the chief was pondering the weighty matter or seeking by his silence to impress upon his audience the importance of the decision before the body. When he spoke, he gained such support that when the vote was taken the ambassadors were spared.[7]

The council considered such matters as moving the camp, undertaking a tribal war, making peace, seeking an alliance with other tribes for the purpose of proceeding to war against a common enemy, the selection of the time and place of the summer hunt, community religious services, the disposition of spoils belonging to the band (but not of spoils acquired by a raiding party), the allocation of supplies to widows and the needy, and the regulation of trade with outsiders.

When any important decision had been reached, it was announced by the camp crier, who, mounting his horse, heralded the news as he rode through the village. If by any chance the decision was not in accord with public feeling, the action was likely to be modified. In practice, however, this seldom happened, for public sentiment had been well ascertained before the council met. The older men were always slow to take any radical action. [202]

Decisions of councils generally were regarded by the warriors as sacrosanct. Punishment for violating these decisions was certainly neither common nor necessary. The warriors obeyed more from fear of arousing the anger of their chiefs and the displeasure of the supernatural powers than because of any respect for authority in the abstract. The nomadic character of the Comanches, however, made it impossible for the chiefs to keep in touch with their warriors at all times, and when a warrior committed an offense, his punishment, so far as the chief and council were concerned, usually went no further 687

[7] M. M. Kenney, "Tribal Society among Texas Indians," *The Quarterly* of the Texas Historical Association, Vol. I (1897), 31.

687 than rebuke and admonition. The people in general, however, showed great respect and obedience to their chiefs and headmen.

623 555 While warfare was still going on, the exactions of the chiefs, headmen, and counselors who stood at the top of the scale of society were kept in check by fear of reprisals should some man of lower rank later rise to supremacy. Thus the warriors prevented the tipping of the scales toward undue governmental authority. The end of warfare froze the social system, depriving able young men of all chance of social advancement, since this primary means of achieving status was blocked. As a result, the old men became arrogant in a way that they dared not in earlier times.[8]

624 701 War chiefs were men who had war records and who had won leadership by personal bravery and exhibitions of courage and skill. Each band seemed to have recognized one individual as the leading war chief. Apparently his elevation to the position was given official recognition by the council of elders. Yet, again, in this matter the council apparently followed public opinion, which in this case would be the wishes of the warriors. The war chief was apt to be a younger man than the civil chief and in times of war might possibly overshadow the leading civil chief.

In the event of the death or decline and withdrawal of a war chief, the warriors in council selected one of their number and installed him as their leader. The discussion and the expressions of opinion usually showed clearly who was the most popular man for the place. There appears to have been no formal balloting; the discussion continued until sentiment had crystalized around one man. In addition to the number-one war chief, each band had a number of war leaders of lesser rank.

701 The prosecution of warfare was very much a matter of individual discretion. Any Comanche was theoretically eligible to lead a war party, and there was no power to restrain him. A warrior who wished to organize a war party made known his intention. If his military reputation had been established in combat, if his "medicine" was powerful, and if he was known to be liberal in the division of the spoils, he seldom had difficulty in securing a large following. Continued successes would lead to his elevation to the chieftainship.

[8] Ralph Linton, "The Distinctive Aspects of Acculturation," *loc. cit.*, 506.